



PALO VERDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Special Board Meeting

Minutes

Monday, August 17, 2026

Open Session: 4:00 p.m. | Closed Session: Immediately Following Open Session

Physical Meeting Location: One College Drive, Blythe, CA – CL 101

LiveStream Meeting Location: PVC Needles Center, 725 W. Broadway, Needles, CA

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1. OPENING OF MEETING

1.1 CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m. by Board President Gloria Copple.

1.2 ROLL CALL

- **Trustees Present:** Gloria Copple, Jon McNeil, Scott Dean, Brad Arneson, Stella Camargo-Styers, Glenda Williams, Student Trustee Grace Wehrli
- **Trustees Absent:** Angel Ramirez
- **Administrators Present:** Edward "Ed" Knudson, Interim Superintendent/President

Note:

- *In accordance with California Education Code, the Student Trustee's vote is advisory and does not count toward the final Board action.*

1.3 FLAG SALUTE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

1.4 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Approve the Agenda for this meeting.

Moved by: Jon McNeil

Seconded by: Scott Dean

Action: Motion Carries

Vote:

- **Yes:** Gloria Copple, Jon McNeil, Scott Dean, Brad Arneson, Stella Camargo-Styers, Glenda Williams, Grace Wehrli

1.5 ANNOUNCEMENT OF RECUSAL FROM AGENDA ITEMS

Board President Copple announced that she would recuse herself from Item 2.2 – Approval of Supplemental Pay – Ryan Copple.

Interim Superintendent/President Knudson addressed the Board regarding Items 2.1 and 2.2 and explained why the matters were being brought back separately for consideration. Mr. Knudson stated that, at the August 11, 2026, Regular Board Meeting, the Personnel Actions Report had been removed from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration due to a proposed supplemental payment included within the report. He explained that the supplemental payment should have been separated from the Personnel Actions Report at that time; however, because it was not, the Board's vote resulted in the entire Personnel Actions Report not being approved. Mr. Knudson apologized and took responsibility for not identifying the need to separate the items before the vote.

In response to questions from Trustees McNeil and Dean, Mr. Knudson clarified that the Board would consider the Personnel Actions Report again under Item 2.1 without the supplemental payment and would consider the proposed supplemental payment separately under Item 2.2. Mr. Knudson reiterated that the entire Personnel Actions Report had been removed from the Consent Agenda at the previous meeting, rather than the individual supplemental pay item, and again accepted responsibility for not identifying the issue at that time.

2. OPEN SESSION

2.1 APPROVAL OF PERSONNEL ACTIONS REPORT

Motion: Approve the Personnel Actions Report as presented.

Moved by: Stella Camargo-Styers

Seconded by: Brad Arneson

Action: Motion Carries

Vote:

- **Yes:** Gloria Copple, Jon McNeil, Brad Arneson, Stella Camargo-Styers, Glenda Williams, Grace Wehrli
- **No:** Scott Dean

2.2 APPROVAL OF SUPPLEMENTAL PAY – RYAN COPPLE

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Motion: Approve a one-time supplemental payment of \$24,000 to Ryan Copple for the 2026–2027 fiscal year for additional duties associated with the expansion of the District's Athletic Department.

Moved by: Scott Dean

Seconded by: Jon McNeil

Action: Motion Fails

Vote:

- **Yes:** Jon McNeil, Scott Dean, Glenda Williams, Grace Wehrli
- **No:** Brad Arneson, Stella Camargo-Styers
- **Recused:** Gloria Copple

Board Discussion:

Board Clerk Dean read a prepared statement regarding the proposed supplemental payment. The statement is attached to and incorporated into these minutes as Attachment A – Trustee Dean Statement.

Following his prepared statement, Trustee Dean further discussed the proposed supplemental payment and stated that Mr. Copple had informed him that he was working additional hours related to establishing the three new sports programs and six teams. Trustee Dean commented on the potential for the expanded athletic programs to bring additional students to campus and questioned why Mr. Copple should not receive additional compensation for performing additional work, noting that other District employees had received additional compensation for additional duties. Trustee Dean reiterated his belief that Board decisions should be based on the facts and not personal bias.

Interim Superintendent/President Knudson clarified that the proposed supplemental payment differed from other additional-duty compensation because Mr. Copple serves as Athletic Director, an administrative position, and had also been assigned faculty duties as Head Basketball Coach. Mr. Knudson explained that coaching ordinarily carries a stipend for a faculty member; however, the question before the Board involved how that compensation should apply to an administrator taking on a faculty coaching assignment. In response to Trustee Dean's questions regarding recruitment of a separate Head Basketball Coach, Mr. Knudson stated that he was not aware of any active recruitment and explained that Mr. Copple had requested the coaching assignment.

Executive Assistant Alaniz clarified that the minutes from the August 11, 2026, Regular Board Meeting had not yet been completed and would be presented to the Board for approval at the September Regular Board Meeting.

Trustee Arneson stated that he opposed the supplemental payment because he believed development and expansion of the athletic program was already part of the Athletic Director's existing responsibilities and therefore should not warrant additional compensation.

Trustees Williams and Camargo-Styers requested clarification regarding the planned expansion of the athletic program and the additional teams associated with the proposed payment. Mr. Knudson clarified that the \$24,000 supplemental payment was intended to compensate for additional responsibilities associated with building the athletic program over the next year, including establishing three additional sports comprising six teams, recruiting coaches and student-athletes, and completing the processes necessary to establish the programs. He emphasized that the proposed payment was for these program-development responsibilities and was non-renewable.

Trustee Williams expressed support for expanding the District's athletic offerings beyond basketball and commented on the benefits of providing additional opportunities for students to participate in athletics.

Board Vice President McNeil, who assumed responsibility for facilitating discussion of the item due to President Copple's recusal, expressed support for the proposed supplemental payment and expansion of the athletic program. Drawing upon his prior experience in athletics and administration, Trustee McNeil discussed the time commitment associated with coaching and stated that he believed the proposed compensation was reasonable in relation to the additional responsibilities. He also discussed the potential financial, institutional, and student benefits of expanding athletics and encouraged the Board to work together in a positive and collaborative manner.

Board Vice President McNeil opened the floor for public comment. There was no public comment on the item, and he called for the vote.

Attachment:

[Attachment A - Trustee Dean Statement.pdf](#) 

2.3 EEO TRAINING

Elena Rodriguez, Acting Vice President of Human Resources, provided Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) training to the Board of Trustees.

3. HEARING OF CITIZENS - CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

3.1 PUBLIC COMMENT ON CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

There was no public comment on Closed Session items.

4. RECESS TO CLOSED SESSION

The Board recessed to Closed Session at 4:52 p.m.

4.1 PUBLIC EMPLOYEE APPOINTMENT (GOVERNMENT CODE § 54957(b)(1))

5. RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

The Board reconvened to Open Session at 5:40 p.m.

5.1 REPORT ON ANY ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION

Board President Copple reported that no action was taken in Closed Session.

6. CLOSING OF MEETING

6.1 ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 5:41 p.m.



Scott Dean, Board Clerk

Minutes approved at the September 8, 2026, Regular Board Meeting

Minutes prepared by Naomi Alaniz, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/President and Board of Trustees. These minutes are a summary of reports, discussions, and actions taken at this meeting. Audio/video recordings of Board of Trustees meetings are available on the District's website for public review and may be consulted for a more complete record of meeting discussions.

BOARD STATEMENT

August 17, 2026

At our August 11 Board meeting, I personally heard Trustee Brad Arneson ask, **"What about the last five years?"**

I want to be clear about that. I am repeating what I personally heard Trustee Arneson say during the meeting. I am not representing that quotation as language taken from approved minutes, because those minutes are not yet available. I am stating my own firsthand recollection of what was said.

Trustee Arneson is certainly free to explain or clarify what he meant by that statement. But I am equally entitled, as a member of this Board who was present and heard the statement, to respond to it.

So, what about the last five years?

If we are going to examine the last five years, then I believe we should examine all of those five years, consistently and fairly - not selectively invoke five years of history when doing so casts suspicion on President Copple.

Our own Board Policy 2715 requires us to base our decisions upon all available facts, to work with fellow Board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation despite differences of opinion, and to exercise our authority for the interests of the entire District rather than for the benefit of particular individuals.

Reference: Palo Verde Community College District Board Policy 2715, Code of Ethics, provisions 2, 3, 5, and 6.

The Athletic Department did not suddenly appear when Gloria Copple became Board President. Athletics has been an established College program. The official May Board minutes record that the program had served more than 100 student-athletes and provided opportunities for students to continue their education, including scholarships and degree completion.

Reference: May 12, 2026 Board meeting minutes, discussion concerning the Palo Verde College athletics program.

And as recently as August 11, this Board's own agenda included student athletic insurance and a \$61,500 athletic-training agreement for the basketball programs. Tonight we are considering another Athletic Department matter: a \$24,000 supplemental payment associated with adding three new sports programs and six teams.

Reference: August 11, 2026 Board agenda, Items 8.9 and 9.14; August 17, 2026 Special Board Meeting, Item 2.2.

And since Trustee Arneson asked, "**What about the last five years?**", I think we should also look at how personnel matters have been handled.

Trustee Arneson has certainly been willing to vote yes on personnel actions involving College employees. For example, the official record from the May 12 meeting shows Trustee Arneson voting yes, along with every other Board member present, on the consent motion that included approval of the April 2026 Personnel Actions Report.

Reference: May 12, 2026 Board meeting minutes, Consent Items 11.1 through 11.7, including the April 2026 Personnel Actions Report. Trustee Arneson voted yes.

So when I heard Trustee Arneson say, "**What about the last five years?**", it caused me to ask another question: **Why is this particular employee suddenly different?**

Why single out one employee's additional compensation when personnel actions involving other employees have routinely come before this Board for approval?

And what happened on August 11 makes that question even more important.

The Personnel Actions Report was not an agenda item concerning only one employee. It was an entire personnel report. The agenda specifically stated that Human Resources had verified that all appointees met the required minimum qualifications, and the recommendation was to approve the Personnel Actions Report for July and August 2026 as presented.

Reference: August 11, 2026 Board agenda, Item 8.12, Approval of Personnel Actions Report - July and August 2026.

My concern is that in attempting to stop one personnel action, the vote affected everybody contained in that personnel action. These were real employees and applicants whose appointments, promotions, compensation changes, or other personnel actions were before this Board.

And I personally remember Trustee Stella Styers reacting with surprise and asking words to the effect of, **"It was a no for all of them?"**

I heard that myself. Just as I personally heard Trustee Arneson say, **"What about the last five years?"** I am not presenting either statement as a quotation from approved August 11 minutes, because those minutes are not yet available. I am stating what I personally heard while sitting in that meeting.

And that brings us directly to why these personnel matters are before us again today. Today's special-meeting agenda again contains Item 2.1, Approval of Personnel Actions Report. The agenda once again says Human Resources verified that all appointees meet the required minimum qualifications. Then, separately, Item 2.2 asks us to consider Ryan Copple's one-time supplemental compensation.

Reference: August 17, 2026 Special Board Meeting, Items 2.1 and 2.2.

And I think separating those matters today demonstrates something important. Ryan Copple's supplemental compensation can be debated on its own merits. Board members can vote yes or no on that item. But other employees should not become collateral damage in an effort to defeat one person's compensation.

Item 2.2 tells us exactly what the proposed payment is: a one-time \$24,000 supplemental payment for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, tied to additional duties involving the establishment of three new sports programs and six teams. It is specifically limited to those additional duties, limited to one fiscal year, and is not renewable.

Reference: August 17, 2026 Special Board Meeting, Item 2.2, Approval of Supplemental Pay - Ryan Copple.

So let us debate that. Is the work worth \$24,000? Are the additional duties justified? Is establishing three new sports programs and six new teams sufficient additional responsibility? Those are legitimate Board questions.

But if the objection is something else - if this is about who Ryan Copple is related to, or about Gloria Copple - then say what the issue is, identify the applicable law, Board Policy, or Administrative Procedure, and let us deal with that issue openly.

What I do not believe we should do is oppose an entire group of personnel actions simply because someone objects to one person contained within that group.

One employee should not become the reason that every other employee loses an opportunity that the administration and Human Resources have recommended for Board approval.

And if we are really going to ask, "**What about the last five years?**", then I welcome that examination. Let us look at five years of votes. Five years of personnel actions. Five years of Athletic Department decisions. Five years of Board minutes. Five years of approvals and objections.

But let us examine the whole record, not five years selectively invoked against one person.

Our own Board Policy 2715 requires Board members to base decisions on all available facts, work cooperatively despite differences, and act for the interests of the District as a whole.

Reference: Palo Verde Community College District Board Policy 2715, Code of Ethics, provisions 2, 3, 5, and 6.

If there is a conflict, identify the conflict and cite the law or policy. If there is a violation, identify the violation and cite the Board Policy or Administrative Procedure. If there is evidence, present the evidence.

ACCJC has specifically asked whether this Board follows its established Board Policies and Administrative Procedures, ethically functions as a collective body, acts in the best interest of the institution, and remains independent of undue influence.

Reference: ACCJC Action Letter, March 23, 2026, Standard 4.6.

I will apply the same standard to President Copple, Trustee Arneson, myself, and every other member of this Board.

Facts first. Policy second. Personalities last.

That is how I believe this Board should govern.

IF we govern based on our own personal biases, then all we have is biased governance, not true representational government.